

Sleepytime Palace

Credit for this idea should actually go to my boyfriend, Tom. I asked what I should make for this assignment, and he said “you should do a sleep podcast” to which I replied “you just want me to record a sleep podcast *for you*, but also that’s a good idea.” I had no clue such things existed until the first night I stayed over at his place and he, completely unprompted, put one on. Usually they’re more than 2 minutes, something like an hour, and he listens to a bunch of different ones (one is just a guy talking, one tells you stories, one is like a guided meditation, etc etc) but in listening to the examples from class, I liked that the basketball courtside one gave you a sort of narration to ground you in the scene and explain what exactly is happening around you.

I was also riding off of the high of getting my voice complimented by the voice actors at Harry’s VO workshop a few weeks ago, so I wanted to write out a really pleasant script that specifically took you through some interesting soundscapes. Tom suggested the forest and the ocean, and I know that I love falling asleep while my roommates are having fun in the other room, so that was where the dinner party came from. I added the mystic because it had some fun potential for interesting sound effects.

I recorded my voice in one of the little rooms in the radio institute (and the quality is not stellar, but whatever, usually the voices in sleep podcasts aren’t super crisp anyway) and got a really lovely ambient music track from the audio library. Aside from my voice, everything else was stereo sources from the audio library placed in ambisonic space. I did, at one point, rent out the Voyage just to give it a test toast, and I did end up figuring out how to record in ambisonics (I think?) but after reconsidering my topic I just decided to source everything externally.

This was way fun and I think now that I’m getting the hang of working in ambisonics I’d love to try and make more nice little soundscapes, and maybe record an actual full-length sleep podcast for Tom (or, I guess, anyone else too).

Here’s the script, with notes as to what’s going on at each moment.

“Hello, and welcome to the gates of sleepytime palace. I’ve been waiting for you all day, and I can’t wait to help guide you gently to a deep and peaceful sleep. Get cozy, and imagine yourself lying on a bed made of the sunset.”

I brought in the ambient music at the very start, then added a low-pass filter to a sound effect of someone making a bed, to make it seem more cloud-like.

The thick clouds are your pillows and blankets, and you’re warmed by the radiant sun, but cooled by the black expanse of the night. You can start to relax the tension in your body

A drone with the width cranked up and rotated so it goes from your head to your toes

because you're floating in a cosmic lazy river, and I'll guide you the whole way.
Subtle water babbling noises slightly below and behind you

As we open the gates,
The gates open in front of you, then close behind you.

we'll first pass through the forest. It's always gently raining here, but the frogs don't mind at all. The raindrops keep them cool and the thunder booms under their little webbed feet.

There's a wind sound, a rain sound, and 3 different frog sfx. Stereo encoder was used to place the wind and rain, and then room encoder was used to place each of the frog sources and have the listener slowly move past them and slightly above them.

I'll take you on a little tour through the palace itself. In the living room, the roaring fireplace will dry you off right away, and help yourself to a gooey golden-brown marshmallow, a special kind that won't leave a weird taste in your mouth in the morning.

Once we enter the palace, I used the room encoder to make a massive hallway and automated the listener to spend the rest of the time slowly moving from one end to the other, and placed various elements on either side and slightly below, so it felt like you were floating past them. The fireplace is made of a deep roaring fire and a crackly fire.

The hosts are having a dinner party this evening, but don't worry. You're not interrupting. They love watching people float by. They're clinking their drinks to you and wishing you sweet dreams.

The dinner party is made up of some restaurant walla, women laughing, men cheering, and glasses clinking.

We'll also pass by the mystic's quarters. She's working as we speak to boost up your luck and leave you feeling extra rested for tomorrow.

The mystic is humming, and there's the sound of water boiling along with a poof and some little magical flourishes.

Now to drift you off to the land of dreams, you'll float off into a soft, quiet ocean.

We exit the palace and the stereo encoder was used to place the sound of ocean waves, birds, and a subtle creaking of a wooden boat as you go to sea!